

Technology Ed./Introduction to Technology/Project 3

READING CONNECTION (continued)

Extended Product Responsibility

But it's more than recycling. It's also about sustainability. Extended Product Responsibility (EPR) challenges each of us to reduce the life cycle environmental effects of products. It is a challenge that consumers, governments and the private sector must accept.



Some manufacturers and retailers already have accepted that challenge. Sony Electronics recently announced that it is setting up a take back and recycling program for Sony products in Minnesota. IBM offers a computer recycling service for consumers and small businesses. Gateway Country stores give discounts for new personal computers to individuals who donate working 386-class or better computers of any brand to Goodwill. Dell Computer Corporation is manufacturing a line of computers that are completely recyclable. Hewlett Packard has added design improvements that help with disassembly.

One campaign, "Take It Back" has been developed by several organizations to support EPR. Their objective is to encourage manufacturers assume financial responsibility for their products when they become obsolete. If this were the case, organizers believe that manufacturers would have an incentive to reduce cost by designing products that are reusable, repairable, upgradeable, recyclable and so on.

Recently, Massachusetts has formed the Product Stewardship Institute. The Institute, which is housed at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, will assist Massachusetts and other states in promoting environmentally sound product management and design through coordinated, multi-stakeholder stewardship agreements negotiated with industry.

Currently, there are no electronic products recycling programs in South Carolina. The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control and the Recycling Market Development Advisory Council is currently working with the Product Stewardship Institute on this issue.

To learn more about the management of electronics, extended product responsibility and product stewardship, visit DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling Web site at www.scdhec.net/recycle or call 1-800-768-7348.

Web Sites for E-Waste Information

- The U.S. EPA's "WasteWise" program (www.epa.gov/wastewise)
- The National Recycling Coalition's Electronics Recycling Initiative (www.nrc-recycle.org/programs/electronics/index.htm)
- The National Safety Council's Electronic Product Recovery and Recycling Directory (www.nsc.org/ehc/epr2/recycler.htm).

DID YOU KNOW? Old electronic products probably are not worth what you think. Generally, the older an electronic product becomes, the more quickly its value fades.



DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling FYIs provide general information on environmental topics. Readers are encouraged to reproduce this material. For more information about solid waste issues, please call 1-800-768-7348 or visit our Web site at www.scdhec.net/recycle. Please send written correspondence to: DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.